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Intelligence Memorandum

The Fourth National People's Congress

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The Fourth National People's Congress

Introduction

The Fourth National People's Congress (NPC), held in Peking between January 13 and 17, provides China with an approved government structure, a state constitution, and a government leadership succession, at least at the highest level. The long delay in convening the congress—it was to have been soon after the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969—and the initial secrecy connected with it suggest that leadership differences have yet to be ironed out. The congress was preceded by the



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Basic Data on the Fourth NPC

Date: January 13 to 17 in Peking.
Preliminary meetings held January 5 to 11.

Number of delegates: 2,885—of whom 2,864 attended.
At least one delegate died during the session.

Permanent chairmen
of Presidium: 23 persons, headed by Chu Teh.

Presidium: 218 deputies named.

Secretary general
of Presidium: Wu Teh.

Chairman of Standing
Committee of NPC: Chu Teh.

Vice chairmen of NPC
Standing Committee: 22 persons.

Major Reports: Revision of the constitution—Chang Chun-chiao;
Regarding the work of the government—Chou En-lai.

Text of all documents can be found in FBIS Daily Report for China, January 20, 1975.

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second plenum of the Tenth Central Committee, held January 8 to 10, which passed recommendations to the congress on the composition of the leadership and the final wording of the documents.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung did not attend the plenum or the congress; his absence may have been related to differences with the dominant forces in Peking over how hard to push the campaign against the military. The communique issued at the conclusion of the congress makes relatively little mention of Mao personally. The guiding role of "Mao Tse-tung Thought" was written into the new constitution, however, and the chairman of the party was designated commander of the armed forces. One provision of the constitution was included at Mao's behest, so he obviously had a hand in drafting and approving the document. Whatever the reason for Mao's absence, his health remains reasonably good, and he remains an active political force.

The congress endorsed and codified the moderate policies of recent years. The new list of government leaders is headed by Premier Chou En-lai and composed predominantly of order-minded civilian bureaucrats. The policy statements approved by the congress stress moderation and continuity, and the constitution embodies the essentials of current pragmatic economic policies.

The leaders of the ultraleftist forces, Mao's wife Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan, did not gain government posts. Indeed, with the exceptions of the new minister of culture and the lowest ranking vice premier, it is difficult to identify any doctrinaire leftists in the State Council. The constitution and the reports adopted by the congress do, however, include some language and provisions that apparently are a sop to leftist ideals.

The revised government structure has fewer ministries, which should improve centralized control. The post of state chairman has been abolished as part of an effort to increase party control over the government. Chou's report on the work of government also underscores the prerogatives of central management and gives special emphasis to comprehensive economic planning.

In all, the congress appears to have set the stage for a period in which stress will be placed on pragmatic economic development goals rather than ideological debates or open political struggle. The age and poor health of several of the top party and government leaders, however, creates uncertainty as to the durability of the current leadership arrangements. As each of China's aging leaders passes from the scene, some readjustment of the distribution of political power will result. This process could eventually affect the pragmatic basis of economic modernization policies.

THE STATE COUNCIL

PREMIER AGE

*Chou En-lai 76

VICE PREMIERS

*Teng Hsiao-ping	70	Rehabilitated civilian, runs government on day-to-day basis.
*Chang Chun-chiao	63	Shanghai party leader, acts as party secretary general.
*Li Hsien-nien	70	Veteran administrator, former finance minister.
*Chen Hsi-lien	62	Peking Military Region commander.
*Chi Teng-kuei	40s	Elevated from Honan Province during Cultural Revolution; first Political Commissar, Peking Military Region.
*Hua Kuo-feng	Late 50s	Hunan party leader elevated to Peking in 1971. An agricultural expert, now minister of public security.
*Chen Yung-kuei	Mid-50s	Leader of national agricultural model Tachai Production Brigade.
*Wu Kuei-hsien	About 46	Helps represent youth and women on Politburo. Actual power unknown.
Wang Chen	66	Former chief of Railway Corps and land reclamation minister.
Yu Chiu-li	65	Veteran economic planner, heads State Planning Commission.
Ku Mu	Probably in 60s	Veteran administrator, heads State Capital Construction Commission.
Sun Chien	30-40	Worker from Tientsin.

**Politburo member*

GOVERNMENT MINISTERS

MINISTRY*	NAME	DATE NAMED	REMARKS
Foreign Affairs	Chiao Kuan-hua	Nov 1974	Civilian veteran
National Defense	Yeh Chien-ying	Jan 1975	Military veteran
State Planning Commission	Yu Chiu-li	Oct 1972	Civilian veteran
Capital Construction Commission	Ku Mu	June 1973	Civilian veteran
Public Security	Hua Kuo-feng	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Foreign Trade	Li Chiang	Oct 1973	Civilian veteran
Economic Relations with Foreign Countries	Fang I	April 1970	Civilian veteran
Agriculture and Forestry	Sha Feng	Nov 1970	Former soldier
Metallurgy	Chen Hsiao-kun	Nov 1971	Former soldier
1st Machine Building	Liu Shui-ching	March 1971	Former soldier
2nd Machine Building	Liu Hsi-yao	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
3rd Machine Building	Li Chi-tai	Jan 1975	Former soldier
4th Machine Building	Wang Cheng	May 1963; first re-identification since Cultural Revolution: Jan 1975	Former soldier
5th Machine Building	Li Cheng-fang	Jan 1975	Former soldier
6th Machine Building	Pien Chiang	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
7th Machine Building	Wang Yang	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Coal	Hsu Chin-chiang	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Petroleum and Chemical	Kang Shih-en	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Water Conservancy and Power	Chien Cheng-ying	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Light Industry	Chien Chih-kuang	July 1970	Civilian veteran
Railways	Wan Li	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Communications	Yeh Fei	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Posts and Telecommunications	Chung Fu-hsiang	Aug 1973	Civilian veteran
Finance	Chang Ching-fu	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Commerce	Fan Tzu-yu	Dec 1972	Civilian veteran
Culture	Yu Hui-yung	Jan 1975	Civilian
Education	Chou Jung-hsin	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran
Public Health	Liu Hsiang-ping	July 1973	Civilian veteran
Physical Culture and Sports	Chuang Tse-tung	Jan 1975	Civilian veteran

*Ministries listed in order presented to the NPC

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The State Council

The State Council, which includes the premier, vice premiers, and government ministers, is a smaller and more streamlined body than before the Cultural Revolution. There are now 12 instead of 15 vice premiers and 29 ministries instead of 40. Furthermore, three of the current ministers head commissions, which normally rank below ministries in the government hierarchy. Staff offices under the State Council, which were in existence before the Cultural Revolution to oversee the workings of several ministries, have probably been re-established in some form, but this cannot be directly confirmed.

Chou En-lai remains premier. There had been speculation that he might give up the post in favor of Teng Hsiao-ping, who has been running the daily affairs of government since Chou's hospitalization. Instead, Teng is the top-ranking vice premier. Since the Central Committee plenum preceding the congress named Teng a party vice chairman and a member of the Politburo's Standing Committee, he appears to be in a strong position to succeed Chou. The next-ranking vice premier, Chang Chun-chiao, who is in his early sixties, is now the logical successor to Teng, who is 70.

Only one of the vice premiers is a military man, whereas there were four prior to the Cultural Revolution. Several vice premiers have considerable experience in economic planning and administration. Among vice premiers are two persons who are more likely to be symbols than powers in their own right—Chen Yung-kuei of the national agricultural model Tachai Production Brigade, and Wu Kuei-hsien, the first woman vice premier. The background of one vice premier, Sun Chien, is hazy. He is a worker from Tientsin, apparently in his mid-thirties, whose actual role may be minimal. He appears to have leftist credentials and is the lowest ranking vice premier.

Three ministers active in recent years were replaced; all had military backgrounds. A number of the present ministers also have had military careers, but they are almost certainly no longer on active duty. In all, the military did not come off well. In contrast to past practice, the defense minister is not a vice premier. Another military man who was a vice premier before the congress, Nieh Jung-chen, was dropped. Moreover, Li Te-sheng, commander of the Shenyang Military Region, lost his party vice chairmanship and Politburo Standing Committee ranking at the plenum which preceded the congress. Li remains a full member of the Politburo.

The new minister of defense, Yeh Chien-ying, is a close ally of Chou En-lai. Yeh apparently held this post on a de facto basis since the Lin Piao affair in September 1971.

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Hua Kuo-feng

The minister of public security is Hua Kuo-feng. By gaining this politically sensitive post, Hua continues to improve his stature and becomes a man to watch. Hua first gained prominence during the Cultural Revolution but was brought to Peking only after the fall of Lin Piao; he was accused in posters last spring of "suppressing the masses." The power of the public security force has been expanded to include police functions. The Supreme People's Procurate, which formerly exercised police powers, has apparently been abolished.

The Constitution

The new state constitution is a simplified document of 30 articles, as opposed to 106 in the 1954 constitution. The document specifically codifies the fundamentals of moderate economic policies:

- In agriculture, the production team, the lowest of the three organizational levels within the commune, remains the basic accounting unit, as has been the case since the failure of the Great Leap Forward.
- Private plots and individual, non-collective labor are retained.
- Citing agriculture as the economic "base" and industry the "leading factor," the constitution maintains the economic priorities that have prevailed since the Great Leap.

Compromise is evident in several articles. The right to criticize officials and policies through public debate and wall posters, the retention of revolutionary committees as permanent government bodies, and prohibitions against arbitrary arrest and retaliation against those who lodge complaints all appear to be sops to the political left. Citizens also are guaranteed the freedom to strike—a provision included at Mao's behest.

Article 15 places the armed forces, including the militia, under the command of the party chairman rather than the now abolished head of state. The new provision is consistent with attempts to enhance party authority over the military.

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The constitution in general asserts party supremacy over the government apparatus as a whole. Unlike the former constitution, the new charter states specifically that the NPC is under the leadership of the party and performs its duties "on the proposal" of the party Central Committee.

Government Ministries

A number of ministries and commissions have been abolished, and their functions apparently have been transferred to other ministries. Two sensitive commissions dealing with science and technology, for example, have been dropped, although important work in these areas is undoubtedly being carried out in the Chinese Academy of Sciences and possibly in other organizations the Chinese have chosen not to reveal.

In several cases, various ministries were amalgamated. The former ministries of education and of higher education have apparently been merged into a single Ministry of Education. The choice of minister seems to reflect Peking's intention to put education, a politically sensitive area that has often been a hotbed of leftist political agitation, under the control of moderate elements. Chou Jung-hsin, the new minister, has long experience in important State Council positions and in the field of higher education. Significantly, he was the first of the new ministers to appear publicly with Chou En-lai, thus signaling the premier's interest in improving the spotty performance of China's educational institutions.

Concern over economic difficulties in the past year was reflected in the establishment of separate ministries for coal and railways. Both ministries had been subordinated to other bodies. The coal and railway industries have experienced major problems recently, in part because of disruptions caused by the anti-Confucius campaign.

Chou En-lai's Report

Premier Chou left the hospital to deliver a long report on the work of the government. He made some verbal bows to the political left, but the report was basically a firm statement of moderate policies, with emphasis on discipline and the prerogatives of the central authorities. Economic priorities were spelled out clearly and authoritatively for the first time in many years. The order of priorities—agriculture, light industry, and heavy industry—suggests that current policies will be largely continued and that the military's apparent bid for a larger share of the budget has been rebuffed. The speech also strongly endorsed the central government's role in overseeing economic planning.

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Chou praised both Chairman Mao and the Cultural Revolution—statements that could hardly be avoided. He reiterated that criticism of Lin and Confucius was the primary task. Chou noted that the class struggle not only would continue but would become acute at times—an apparent reference to the leadership struggle of the past year which did not rule out future clashes. His emphasis, however, was on unity. While stating that hard blows should be dealt to the handful of class enemies, Chou pointedly remarked that such criticism must be carried out with “accuracy.” This appears to be a slap at those who raised charges against various leaders last spring.

Chang Chun-chiao's Report

Shanghai party boss Chang Chun-chiao gave the report on revision of the state constitution on behalf of the party Central Committee. This assignment is another indication that Chang is acting as party secretary general, although he has never been identified in that post.



Chang Chun-chiao

Youthful party vice chairman Wang Hung-wen, who had presented the report on revision of the party constitution on behalf of the party at the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973, did not gain a government post. While Wang was seated on the rostrum in the Great Hall of the People next to Chou En-lai and with other party vice chairmen, his public role was limited to observing the actions of a congress dominated by men who were active in the Chinese revolution before he was born.

Chang's speech noted that the task of revising the constitution had taken nearly five years. His remarks were closely tied to the provisions of the draft, but he did provide a hint that there may be friction ahead. Chang noted that while state enterprises have the form of socialist ownership, in some cases leadership is not in the hands of real Marxists and the worker masses. The implication of this phrase is not clear, but it may mean that new political attacks may develop as the incipient “New Leap” economic campaign gathers steam.

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Chou on Foreign Policy

Chou En-lai's report on the work of the government, which contains almost all NPC pronouncements on foreign affairs, reaffirms in clear terms established Chinese foreign policy lines and themes. Like his speech to the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973—Chou's last comprehensive statement of Chinese foreign policy—his report to the NPC artfully constructs a practical and ideological foundation for a relatively pragmatic policy. The report indicates that China's foreign policy has changed very little since the Tenth Congress.

Chou used the formulation "Mao's revolutionary line in foreign affairs" to characterize Peking's policy. This formulation refers specifically to China's rapprochement with the US, to which Chou gave a positive assessment. He said that "owing to joint efforts of both sides...relations have improved to some extent," despite continued existence of "fundamental differences." The premier had also used the formulation "improved to some extent" during the Tenth Congress, indicating that, in Peking's view, Sino-US relations have remained at least on track during the intervening 17 months.



Chou En-lai

His acknowledgement that efforts by the US as well as China have contributed to improved relations appears in particular to be a positive element. At the 1973 congress, Chou did not use this formulation, which is seldom employed by Chinese spokesmen. Peking has used the term "fundamental differences" in most authoritative statements relating to Sino-US relations since Chou's speech at the Nixon banquet in February 1972.

The premier said in his report that Sino-US relations will continue to improve as long as the principles of the Shanghai communique are carried out "in earnest." This first use of "in earnest" in an authoritative Chinese statement seems to imply that Peking expects closer attention to the terms in the communique for normalized relations. Chou, however, seemed to minimize Taiwan as a serious source of irritation. He mentioned Taiwan separately

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from the US and only briefly, using a standard formulation which is shorter and less vigorous than the language in his report to the Tenth Party Congress.

In contrast to the party congress speech, Chou did not offer the NPC any justification for China's US policy. In 1973, Chou had implicitly argued that Peking's opening to Washington was a "necessary compromise" between ideologically disparate countries—like the Brest-Litovsk treaty engineered by Lenin with Germany in 1918. Chou had also claimed in 1973 that the US was strategically on the decline—by implication, less threatening to China than the USSR, whose policies were expansionist. The absence of any rationale at the NPC suggests that the present course in Sino-US relations may now be under less criticism within China.

Chou came down hard on the USSR and, as he had 17 months before, held out only the barest hope for amelioration in Sino-Soviet relations. Chou's treatment of the USSR was briefer than in 1973, and rather than castigate individual Soviet leaders and policies, as he did then, he emphasized outstanding substantive issues in state relations. Chou gave his remarks on this issue a veneer of flexibility, but he did not indicate that Peking had altered its terms for reconciliation. He added that Moscow, far from helping to ease the way toward more normal state relations, had taken steps to worsen the situation—including promoting subversion against China and provoking skirmishing along the frontier. As in 1973, the premier virtually closed the door to reconciliation on the party level.

The premier clearly implied that, of the external dangers to Chinese security, Peking remains primarily concerned about the threat posed by the USSR. He hinted strongly, however, that China believes a Soviet attack is less likely now than at the time of the Tenth Party Congress. In his 1973 report, Chou had specifically warned that China should remain particularly vigilant against a surprise Soviet attack, adding that China would "certainly" counterattack. Such admonitions were absent from Chou's report to the NPC and, although his formulations leave no doubt that Chou had Moscow in mind, he did not explicitly name the USSR as China's greatest external threat.

Chou's report in 1973 contained the first authoritative Chinese claim that the Soviet threat was focused on Europe and that Europe had become the main arena for "super power contention." His remarks to the NPC on US-Soviet contention, while not as lengthy as his 1973 treatment of the subject, depicted competition between the US and the USSR as having reached new levels of intensity, thereby making a world war more likely and

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imminent than at the time of the Tenth Party Congress. Chou's handling of the war theme was the most authoritative treatment of a subject which has been standard fare in Chinese propaganda for months. In private, however, Chinese officials remain much less serious about the likelihood of war, suggesting that this line may have greater implications for Chinese domestic rather than foreign policy.

On a related theme, Chou equivocated when he weighed the likelihood of war or revolution, saying the "factors" for both war and revolution "are increasing." By contrast, in 1973 he had quoted Mao's statement of May 1970 that revolution was the main international trend. In fact, Chou's speech at the NPC appears to be the first authoritative Chinese statement to modify this line, which has been quoted extensively for almost five years. It is too early to say if the new formulation will now be standard.

Chou's remarks to the NPC on the so-called Second World—developed countries of some stature but lacking the power of the US and USSR—reflected an evolution in Chinese policy since his report to the Tenth Party Congress. At that time, the premier in vague terms had invited Second World states to join China in a broad front aimed against the "hegemonism" of the super powers. In his report to the NPC, however, Chou more clearly signaled the high priority Peking places on good relations with Europe and Japan. Chou explicitly pledged Chinese support to Second World nations who oppose "super power control, threats, and bullying." He added that China supports European unity and is prepared to work with Tokyo for stronger Sino-Japanese relations.

Chou's speech dealt rather sparsely with the Third World, and his remarks on this subject were largely pro forma, reflecting its relatively low priority. He described the developing countries as the "main force" struggling against super power hegemony, but he refrained from repeating recent press themes which have played hard the idea of Third World economic strength.

The premier's report reaffirmed China's relatively active trade policy, which he did not address in his 1973 speech but which had come under some fire in 1974. He made a brief bow toward the goal of self-reliance in modernizing the economy, but he clearly supported the continued acquisition of capital equipment and technology from abroad. Indeed, the ambitious economic goals he sketched for China by the end of the century could not be reached without foreign technology. Chou said this liberal trade policy in the past had strengthened China, enabling it to withstand Soviet pressure and "imperialist encirclement."

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A Look at the Succession Picture

China's aging leadership has now filled most of the gaps left by the Cultural Revolution in the party, government, and military hierarchies. Successors to Mao and Chou have in effect been designated, although in both cases there is some question as to their staying power. The man who ranks behind Mao and Chou in the party, Wang Hung-wen, is young, relatively inexperienced, and resented by at least some older leaders. Teng Hsiao-ping, Chou's logical successor, is 70 and may succumb to the same enormous pressures of running the government that eventually took its toll on Chou. Moreover, Teng can probably never fully live down his purge in 1967.

Chang Chun-chiao is next in line to Teng Hsiao-ping in the government succession, but the party succession beyond Wang Hung-wen is cloudy. Teng and Chang also rank high on the party side, and either could end up in the top party job should Wang falter. Chang's increased stature is bolstered by his recent acquisition of another post—head of the army's political commissar system. Behind Teng and Chang come several Politburo members whose age, experience, and rank give them a real chance for party leadership over the intermediate term.

On the military side, Defense Minister Yeh Chien-ying and several other leaders of the Military Affairs Commission—the party's instrument for overseeing the military establishment—are also very old. Politburo member Chen Hsi-lien, who commands the prestigious Peking Military Region and is the only vice premier who also is a soldier, remains a prime candidate for military leadership. However, he is almost certainly a politically contentious figure. The Peking Military Region command is a traditional hot seat, and Chen's future is by no means assured.



Teng Hsiao-ping

In sum, significant progress on succession has been made, but an ironclad succession arrangement that will stand up has by no means been made. Moreover, a great deal of power has been concentrated in the hands of a relatively few leaders who hold ranking posts in the party, army, and government. This will probably increase central control for now, but it could cause difficulties over the longer run. When one of the top leaders dies—or if one is purged—the regime will again be confronted with the difficult task of filling several important vacancies.

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